DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 795 24 RC 004 439

AUTHOR Humphrey, Theodore
TITLE Community Background Reports: Cut Bank, Montana. National Study of American Indian Education, Series I, No. 8, Final Report.
INSTITUTION Chicago Univ., Ill.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO BR-8-0147
PUB DATE Dec 69
CONTRACT OEC-0-8-080147-2805
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.35
DESCRIPTORS Agriculture, *American Indians, *Community Study, Demography, Economics, *Education, History, *National Surveys, Petroleum Industry, Physical Environment, *Socioeconomic Influences
IDENTIFIERS Blackfeet Indians, *Montana

ABSTRACT

As a part of the Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education, this paper is a report on the community of Cut Bank, Montana. Data were collected in the fall of 1968, when a 4-member team from the University of Colorado made a 6-week study at the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. General factors studied were location, physical environment, history, population, economy, social conditions, political organization, information media, and religion. The team also examined the educational system in terms of its history, administration, the school board, the dropout problem, curricula, parents, innovations, and overall trends. Where feasible, the role of the Indian student is specifically mentioned in the document. Recommendations are not included in the document, but trends are cited. (BD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

BR 80147
PA-24
RC

THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

ED040795

PROJECT OEC-0-8-080147-2805

FINAL REPORT

Series I

No. 8

Community Background Reports

Cut Bank, Montana

Theodore Humphrey
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado
December, 1969

RC004439

NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

The attached paper is one of a number which make up the Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education.

This Study was conducted in 1968-69-70 with the aid of a grant from the United States Office of Education, OEC-0-8-080147-2805.

The Final Report consists of five Series of Papers:

I. Community Backgrounds of Education in the Communities Which Have Been Studied.

II. The Education of Indians in Urban Centers.

III. Assorted Papers on Indian Education--mainly technical papers of a research nature.

IV. The Education of American Indians--Substantive Papers.

V. A Survey of the Education of American Indians

The Final Report Series will be available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service after they have been announced in Research in Education. They will become available commencing in August, 1970, and the Series will be completed by the end of 1970.

CONTENTS

PART I CUT BANK, MONTANA

PART II EDUCATION

Preface

In the fall of 1968, a four member field team from the University of Colorado spent six weeks on and around the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Montana. This report is a description of one of the communities studied at that time, as well as on later visits.

The research was sponsored by the National Study of American Indian Education. The University of Colorado team thanks the school system of Cut Bank, Montana, the city and county government, the federal agencies and the many persons who not only made the research possible but also helped make our visit a rewarding experience.

CUT BANK, MONTANA

Location and Physical Environment

Cut Bank is a community of approximately 5,000 people, located in north central Montana. Situated on the east bank of Cut Bank Creek, it is approximately 25 miles south of the Canadian border and 55 miles east of the Rocky Mountains and Glacier National Park.(Map 1) Local elevation (at the Cut Bank Airport) is 3850 feet. The area surrounding Cut Bank to the north, east and south can be described as High Plains.

Winters are severe, with mean maximums below freezing for January and February, and recorded lows going to -46°. Summers are mild with temperatures remaining generally below 80°. The mean snowfall over a forty one year period is recorded as 36.8 inches.

The Cut Bank area offers transportation service for both freight and passengers by rail, bus and air.

Air passenger service is provided by West Coast Air Lines which has one flight per day west to Spokane, Washington, and southeast to Great Falls, Montana.

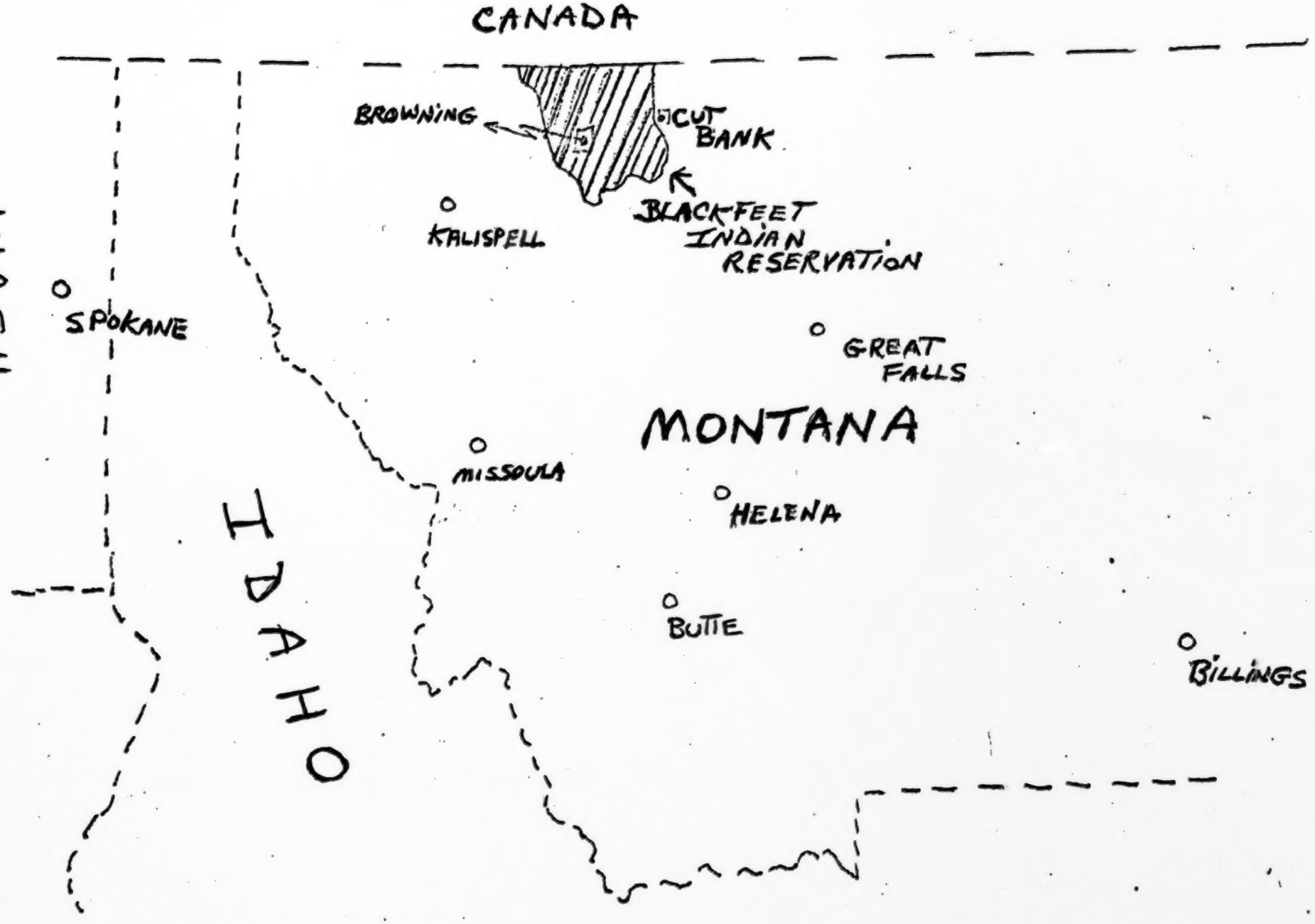
Cut Bank's major highway, U. S. 2, runs east and west. The Intermountain Bus Line offers one bus west (to Kalispell) and one east (to Shelby) each day. One round trip per day is offered to Great Falls, Montana. Several major trucking firms, as well as local independent truckers, serve the community.

Main line rail facilities provided by the Great Northern Railway offer passenger and freight services west to Seattle and Portland, and east to Minneapolis and Chicago. There are two trains each way each day.

Cut Bank, for a town of its size, is perhaps unusual in having a complex network of pipelines for the internal and external transportation of crude oil and natural gas.

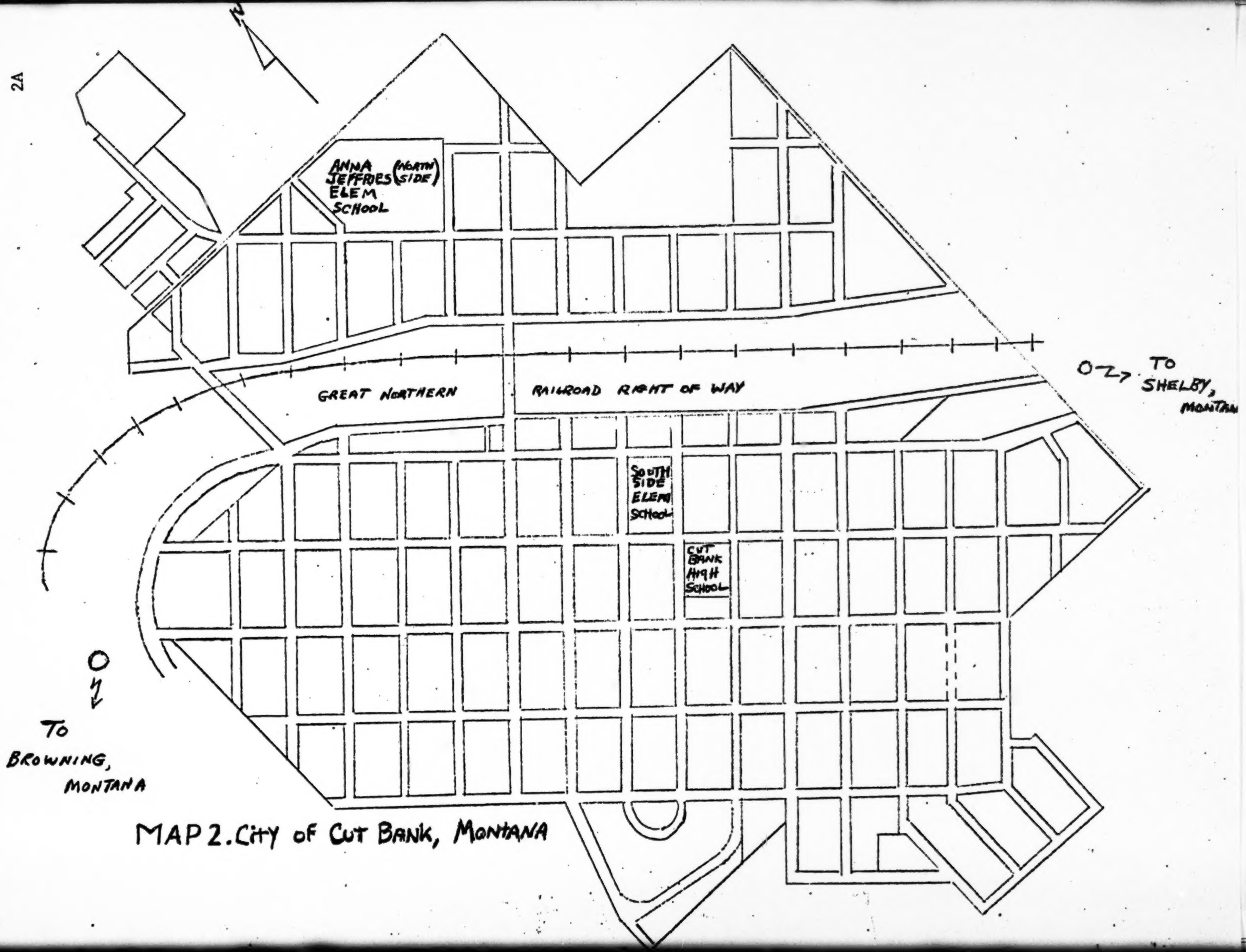
History

The area now occupied by Cut Bank and Glacier County was the homeland of the Blackfeet Indians. In the late 18th century the French and British traded peacefully with the Blackfeet, but after the explorations of Lewis and Clark in 1806, Americans soon began to trickle into the region. These Americans preferred to trap their own furs, rather than to trade with the Indians. White traders were acceptable to the Blackfeet, trappers were not and hostility ensued; settlement of this part of Montana was delayed for many years. The movement of West Coast bound emigrants could not, however, be permanently forestalled and by the middle of the 19th century the Blackfeet felt the influence of the white man in terms of whiskey, plagues and a bewildering increase in war.



RELATIVE LOCATION OF CUT BANK, MONTANA

MAP 1



MAP 2. City of Cut Bank, Montana

By a series of treaties beginning in 1855, the Blackfeet of Montana began relinquishing lands to the Federal Government in exchange for promised amnesties and protection from the depredations of the white men in the area.

Following the virtual extinction of the buffalo in this area in 1883-4, the compression of the reservation boundaries into present day dimensions was accomplished by 1888. Around 1890 the major activity of the whites in the region was cattle ranching.

The town of Cut Bank had its beginning in 1891 when the Great Northern Railway was pushed as far west as Kalispell. The town grew and prospered and became a division point for both the Great Northern and the Burlington railroads. At this same time, the area around Cut Bank was a huge cattle domain where some of the biggest outfits in Northern Montana ranged their herds. Many of the big herds, though, were broken up in 1909. Within three years the area became almost entirely agricultural. Thus, by 1912 homesteaders had fenced and were cultivating most of the tillable land in the area.

Because of the large number of railroad employees and the excellent grain yields in the surrounding area, the town prospered. The 600 residents of Cut Bank decided to incorporate in 1911. Glacier County was created in 1919 with Cut Bank as the county seat.

Growth was slow but steady until 1930 when oil and gas exploration began producing results. The discovery of oil and gas in the area added impetus to the growth of the community, and the population almost tripled in a ten year period--from 845 people in 1930 to 2,509 in 1940. The census reported 3,721 inhabitants in 1950 and 4,539 in 1960.

Currently Cut Bank is a service center not only for the largest oil and gas fields in the state but also for the surrounding livestock and small grains producing area.

Population

The total population of Cut Bank is approximately 5,000. The Indian population is not definitely known. In 1968, the BIA reported that the Indian population was approximately 1,000 persons.[1] In 1969, the BIA reported 400 Indians in Cut Bank.[2]

Cut Bank's most "official" estimate of its Indian population is 1,250.[3]

---

[1]Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Profile: Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation," Browning, Montana, 1968.

[2]BIA, "Total Estimated non-Indian and Indian Population in off-Reservation Towns," Browning, Montana, 1969.

[3]A local gas company official offered a nationally known means of approximating population: the population of a town or a district of a town can be determined by multiplying the number of gas meters by 3.3.

Cut Bank's population is composed of approximately 80 percent whites and 20 percent Indians. Of the 16 parents interviewed in the Cut Bank sample, all spoke only the English language. There is one Negro family living in Cut Bank.

Economy

Agriculture and Industry

Cut Bank acts as a service and marketing center for parts of three counties in Mondana: Eastern part of Glacier County, Western part of Toole County, Northern part of Pondera County. The most important crops are dry land grains. Cattle are also significant. There is no forestry related industry in the town of Cut Bank.

There is no industrial manufacturing in Cut Bank, and no handicraft production. Oil extraction and refining is Cut Bank's major industry. In addition there are six general contractors engaged in construction in or immediately around Cut Bank.

In the town of Cut Bank local business includes the following:

5 Hotels	2 Banks
4 Motels	1 Bowling Alley
5 Grocery Stores	1 Cinema
2 Laundry-cleaners	4 Automobile Dealers
12 Service Stations	5 Barber and 2 Beauty shops
6 Eating places	8 Bars
17 Retail stores	1 State liquor store

With the possible exception of a Beauty Salon, all the businesses in Cut Bank appear to be owned by whites.

There are numerous businesses in Cut Bank--particularly of the service variety--for both the oil and agricultural interests, plus funeral homes, insurance agencies, a taxicab company, trucking companies, and plumbing and heating companies.

Banking

There are two banks in the town of Cut Bank: the First National Bank of Cut Bank and the Bank of Glacier County. The total resources of the First National Bank are $5,050,178 and that of the Bank of Glacier County, $9,699,305.

Current Issues

The economic questions in Cut Bank revolve around whether the agricultural (crops and livestock) community, or the oil (oil and gas) industry provide the major source of income for the community, a matter of concern for local leaders as they envisage Cut Bank's future.

An analysis of agricultural statistics and Glacier County Courthouse records of oil and gas receipts, made by Mr. Parker of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, show that basically income from the oil industry has been going down while agricultural income (particularly cattle) has been increasing.[1]

Arguments have been heard that the oil service industry (pumps, pipes, etc.) in Cut Bank is economically significant and increases the economic contribution of the oil segment of the economy. This, however, is countered by the agriculturalists who state that the agricultural service industry (implement sales, etc.) would contribute correspondingly to the agricultural income.

There could be change, however, in the agricultural/oil balance. The installation of the water flooding method of oil recovery is only 40 percent complete, and exploration teams are still scouring the area for new finds. According to Mr. Parker's data at this time, Fall 1969, the balance of community income is 3 to 1 in favor of agriculture.[2]

On the other hand, the following figures were gathered at the request of the Federal Government which is undertaking the construction of an ABM site and supporting facilities in proximity to Cut Bank:[3]

40 percent Oil business
30 percent Farming and ranching
22 percent Business and professional
8 percent Welfare

The two sets of figures cited above do not quite agree. One explanation would be that Mr. Parker's Glacier County agricultural income is too broad and does not really reflect Cut Bank's income.

Community interest in economic development resulted in the commission of a study for the Industrial Development Committee of the Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce in 1964.[4] A more comprehensive economic development is now (1969) in preparation through a federal government grant of $11,000. The study is being done by Harstad and Associates of Seattle, Washington. The current work in planned economic development is being executed through the City and County Planning Commission.

---

[1]Personal communication from Mr. Parker of the Soil Conservation Service.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Data collected and reported by Mr. Rimmel, Principal, Cut Bank High School.

[4]Howard Huffman, "Community Inventory and Analyses for the Chamber of Commerce of Cut Bank, Montana." Bozeman, Montana, 1969.

A preliminary verbal report on the findings of Harstad and Associates suggests that industry will not be Cut Bank's economic salvation. It is their opinion that an educational institution, such as a Junior College, seems to be the optimum opportunity in relation to community location, transportation, and labor market.

Social Conditions

Housing

A survey of the housing in Cut Bank has been completed by Harstad and Associates of Seattle.[1] Five categories were used in the survey: Superior, Above average, Average, Below average, and Poor. It is interesting to note the percentage of Below Average housing on the north side of the Great Northern railroad tracks, where the majority of the Indian population lives. Considering residential property only, of approximately 30 blocks on the North Side, residences rated:

	Blocks	Percent
Poor	11	36
Below Average	13	43
Average	5	16
Above Average	1	3
Totals	30	98

On the south side of the tracks, in a predominantly white neighborhood of approximately 114 blocks, the housing rated:

	Blocks	Percent
Poor	0	0
Below Average	13	11
Average	76	66
Above Average	13	18
Superior	4	3
Totals	114	98

Whereas there is a rough bell shaped curve south of the tracks, there exists a curve skewed toward the lower end, north of the tracks.

---

[1] Harstad and Associates, "Housing in Cut Bank, Montana: Relative Condition of Structures," Seattle, Washington, 1969, to be published.

Health

Informal information indicates that upper respiratory infections (colds, flu, pneumonia) appear to be the greatest problem.

Life Expectancy

No data (particularly in reference to Indian/white differences) was readily available.

Leisure Activities

The leisure activities offered in Cut Bank are, in an urban sense, restricted to the local cinema, bowling alley and bars, plus the country club and golf course. Outside of the city many of the local citizens like to hunt and fish in this sportsman's paradise.

Social Welfare

General assistance is available to those poor "who do not have sufficient income and resources to supply the necessities of life. . ."[1] No general assistance is given during the summer months, except in emergencies (usually where children are involved). When people apply in the summer they are told that jobs are available. General assistance usually starts with the snowfall in October and lasts until about May. The peak periods are January, February and March.

During the period June 1968 - June 1969 there were 142 non-Indians and 148 Indians on general assistance in Cut Bank. Percentagewise this puts 15 percent of the town's Indian population and only 3 percent of the white population on welfare.

The remaining welfare categories are as follows:[2]

Aid to Dependent Children:	86 Indians
	48 whites
Old Age Assistance:	7 Indians
	25 whites
Aid for Permanently and Totally Disabled Persons:	6 Indians
	12 whites
Aid for the Needy Blind:	3 Indians
	0 whites

---

[1]State of Montana, "Montana's Public Welfare Program," Helena, Montana: Department of Public Welfare, 1968.

[2]Ibid.

Social Organization

Voluntary Associations: Cut Bank has approximately 50 civic organizations (for example, the Hospital Guild, Archery Club); six religious organizations (i.e. Baptist Missionary Society, Presbyterian Women's Association); 25 fraternal organizations (Elks, Moose, Shriners); and 9 service organizations (American Legion, Optimists, etc.).

Family Structure: Sixteen parent interviews revealed data on family size (Table 1).

Table 1

Indian Family Size

Number of Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Number of Families	3	5	4	2			1		1

The <u>average</u> Indian family in Cut Bank has 2 or 3 children.

<u>Political Organization</u>

Cut Bank has a mayor and four-member city council form of government. All five persons are elected every two years in the Spring. Of these five persons, one is of Indian ancestry.

The town has a small police force with a metropolitan police organization; that is, a program for promotion and retirement. The force consists of four officers and the police chief.

The local fire department is a volunteer force with a chief and twenty-five members.

<u>Information Media</u>

There is cable and tower television available in Cut Bank. Five TV stations are received: two from Spokane, Washington; one from Lethbridge, Canada; and two from Great Falls, Montana. In addition radio stations in Great Falls, Shelby, Havre, Montana, and Lethbridge, Canada, are received in Cut Bank.

The local newspaper is the <u>Cut Bank Pioneer Press</u> with a circulation of approximately 2,900.

Newspapers and magazines, and some paperback books, are available at the two drug stores in town. At the Treasure State News Shop a larger selection of magazines and paperback books is available. The Cut Bank County Public Library is located in a modern building. There are 37,295 volumes in the Cut Bank Library; 4,875 in the Browning Branch, and 2,325 in the East Glacier Branch.

Religion

Ten churches are all located on the south side of the Great Northern Railway - in the predominantly white section of town. Denominations represented are First Baptist Church, St. Paul Lutheran, Assembly of God, St. Margaret's Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Emmanuel Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the Church of Christ.

EDUCATION

The Cut Bank School System is a public school system serving children from three areas. Indian children, representing a numerical minority in the school, are bussed in daily from the eastern part of the Blackfeet Reservation. Indian and white students living within the town of Cut Bank generally walk to school. White children from farming and ranching families to the north, east, and south of Cut Bank are bussed to school.

History of Education in Cut Bank, Montana

Prior to 1899 stock raising and ranching were the economic basis for Cut Bank's existence. But in 1899 the Great Northern Railway roundhouse was moved to Cut Bank from Blackfoot, Montana.

Education in Cut Bank was established even before the town was incorporated; as far back as 1902 there was a small one-room school, but the school system actually started in 1910. In that year the first unit of the old South Side Building was constructed at a cost of $20,000. A graded system was set up employing several teachers. Homesteaders were coming into the area in large numbers, and farming was gaining in importance because of the excellent wheat yields.

In 1914 the first school bus route of School District #15, Teton County, was established. A wagon was used as the means of transportation. Cut Bank became the county seat of newly created Glacier County during the year 1919.

The school enrollment gradually grew until 1923, when the Great Northern Railway terminal was moved from Cut Bank to Blackfoot, 26 miles west. This was a most serious blow to the town and school. It was thought that drastic steps would have to be taken to meet this change. However, the discovery of oil and gas in 1930 in this area caused a great boom in the town, and the Cut Bank school soon became overcrowded. The structure known as the old gymnasium (of South Side School) was started in the early part of 1930, several months before the advent of gas and oil.

The bond issue called for a structure costing $40,000. The pressure for classroom space became so great in the old South Side School that even the basement rooms and the old gymnasium were used for that purpose.

The need for additional facilities continued, and in 1936 the first unit of the present high school building was erected at a cost of approximately $100,000. This property became available as a result of an exchange with the County Commissioners. Glacier County had previously obtained the property for the purpose of locating a court house there.

The Junior High School and shop additions to the east end of the high school were completed in 1942 at a cost of $48,000.

With the close of World War II the need for additional elementary school facilities became very apparent. The local citizens decided that the first

structure should be located on the North Side of the city. The result was the new Anna Jefferies Building, started in 1948 and ready for occupancy in September 1950.

Since 1950 additions have been made to the high school (west end in 1956 and new gym in 1958) and to the South Side Elementary School (in 1955-60). Building a middle or high school is presently under debate. One group of citizens, the more educated and progressive, feels that the physical plant has only been up-dated and/or expanded under the immediate duress of student overpopulation. This group stresses the need for planning ahead and greater financial expenditures.

The conservative group seems to feel that the community had better not over-extend itself financially through new or expanded building -- even though facilities may be operating to capacity. The underlying rationale for this group seems to be the fear that the oil industry in Cut Bank will eventually leave, as the surrounding oil fields are exhausted.

Administration

Cut Bank schools are part of a public system and are governed by a seven member elected school board in conjunction with a School Superintendent and four principals.

The four principals in the system have been employed in Cut Bank schools for at least 15 years. The superintendent is relatively new; he has been in his job for about five years.

The administrative structure is basically conservative and from outside appearances very tightly knit and efficient.

It was emphasized by administrators that "no distinction was made between Indian and white students. They were all treated the same." In effect, this meant no special programs for Indian students. At the same time several of the administrators indicated very limited expectations for Indian achievement.

The School Board

The Cut Bank School Board is divided into two parts: the Elementary Trustees and the High School Trustees. There is a total of seven members. The two boards meet together once a month. Occupations of the Board members are as follows: Post master, manager in an implement company, manager of a lumber company, and four ranchers, one of whom is also in the oil industry. Elections are held every year in the spring; one to three members are up for election to the board each year.

The School Board appears to take a conservative position on school system expansion and expenditures. However, for programs they wish to introduce they have adopted an interesting organizational device for initiating

community awareness and approval. Committees of local citizens are recruited to consider and discuss new curriculum, buildings and other situations which need community support. The fourth such committee is now in operation; under consideration is sex education for the Cut Bank school system. The citizens' committees appear to have worked quite effectively.

There are no Indians on the School Board.

Cut Bank Schools

Currently there are four administratively separate schools in Cut Bank. Of these, two are elementary (grades 1-6), one Junior High (grades 6-8), and one High School (grades 9-12).

For the school year 1968-69, the enrollment was as follows: 933 students in the two elementary schools, 295 students in Junior High, and 549 in High School. Approximately 80 percent of the Indian students in elementary school attend North Side Elementary. In the Cut Bank school system, 39 percent of the students are bussed from outlying areas, mostly to North Side School.

Each department in grades 7-12 meets once a month for discussion of curriculum change. Grades 1-6 meet also according to grades taught since they are not departmentalized. Grades 1, 2, 3; 2, 3, 4; and 4, 5, 6 meet together. The meeting of grades 2, 3, 4 provides overlap between the lower and higher grades.

South Side Elementary School.--This school includes 21 classrooms, teachers' lounge, gym, no library (use public library), and 23 teachers, none of whom are Indian. There is a kindergarten. The school has no cafeteria: white children go home for lunch; Indian children are bussed to North Side, where they receive a lunch paid for by the Tribe.

North Side Elementary School.--This school includes 13 classrooms, teachers' lounge, gym, a library (for grades 4, 5, 6), with 5,000 volumes. There are 12 teachers, none of whom are Indians. There is no kindergarten. At this school there is also a cafeteria in which the Tribal hot lunch program provided for Indian students in the Cut Bank School system is served. Fifty percent of the students are bussed.

The number of Indian children attending in 1969-1970 is a total of 97 or 12 percent for both South Side and North Side elementary schools. An elementary school population profile can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Elementary School Enrollment, Cut Bank, Montana

School Year		Indian	White	Total
1969-1970[a]	North Side	69 - 18%	306 - 82%	375
	South Side	28 - 5%	522 - 95%	550
	Total	97 - 12%	828 - 88%	925
1967-1968[b]	Total	136 - 17%	667 - 83%	803
1966-1967[c]	Total	140 - 16%	719 - 84%	859

[a]Data from NSAIE interviews.

[b]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1967-1968," Helena, Montana: Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

[c]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1966-1967," Helena, Montana: Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Junior High School.--The Junior High School includes 10 classrooms, teachers' lounge in High School (next door), gym in High School, library of 3,900 volumes. There are 10 teachers none of whom are Indian. There is no cafeteria. A lunchroom is available for sack lunches; otherwise students go home or to a downtown cafe. Approximately 20 percent of the students are bussed. Twenty four, or 9 percent of the school population consisted of Indian children (Table 3). The junior high school population profile can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Enrollment, Junior High School, Cut Bank, Montana

School Year	Indian	White	Total
1969-70[a]	24 - 9%	238 - 91%	262
1967-68[b]	39 - 13%	261 - 77%	300
1966-67[c]	56 - 30%	130 - 70%	186

[a]Data from NSAIE interviews.

[b]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1967-1968," op. cit.

[c]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1966-1967," op. cit.

High School.--The High School includes 24 classrooms, a teachers' room, a gym, and a library of 8,799 volumes. There are 27 teachers none of whom are Indians. There is no cafeteria. A lunch room is available for sack lunches; otherwise pupils eat at home or downtown. Fifteen percent of the students in high school are bussed. Of these, 2 percent are Indian and 13 percent white.

Unlike the recent decline in Indian population in the elementary and junior high schools (see Tables 2 and 3), the high school enrollment of Indians has tripled since 1966, and is currently 127 or 24 percent of the total (Table 4).

Table 4

High School Enrollment, Cut Bank, Montana

School Year	Indian	White	Total
1969-1970[a]	127 - 24%	403 - 76%	530
1967-1968[b]	72 - 13%	474 - 73%	546
1966-1967[c]	40 - 8%	495 - 92%	535

[a]Data from NSAIE interviews.

[b]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1967-1968," op. cit.

[c]"Indian Education Annual Report, 1966-1967," op. cit.

The teachers in the Cut Bank system appear to take a very professional attitude toward their duties. The teachers in Cut Bank have a high level of certification. Morale seems high.

In 1968 there were 24 new teachers out of 76. Evidently the local teachers remain but there are fluctuating levels of "outside" teachers.

Students seem to have positive feelings about the schools. Both in academic and athletic areas Cut Bank schools have a favorable image. Some of the complaints noted by high school students concerned crowded halls and lockers, and conservative dress regulations--mini skirts for girls and long hair for boys were not permitted.

Dropouts

Dropout information for Cut Bank schools is available from two sources. The first is a Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Report, "The American Indian High School Dropout: The Magnitude of the Problem."[1] A target population of Indian students enrolled in the eighth grade at Cut Bank Junior High School in November 1962 was selected. There were six Indian students listed as being in the eighth grade that year. Over the next five years one of the students left Cut Bank and transferred to East Valley High School, Spokane, Washington. This would give Cut Bank Junior High eighth grade a dropout rate of 16.7 percent.

The second source of data on Cut Bank dropouts available to us presently are from the Indian Education Annual Report 1966-1967 (December 1967).[2] Since it covers more than one grade, a dropout rate percentage comparable to the Northwest Lab. figure cannot be computed. Table 5 summarizes the data.

Table 5

Dropouts Grade 6 - 12, Cut Bank, Montana, 1965-1967*

Year		Indian							All Students						
1966-1967	Grade	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	No. of Dropouts	0	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	12	7	0	1	0	1
1965-1966	No. of Dropouts	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	2

*Source: "Indian Education Annual Report 1965-1966" and "Indian Education Annual Report, 1966-1967," op. cit.

The Cut Bank data points up the importance of including the seventh grade in the compilation of information on dropout rates.

---

[1] Alphonse Selinger, The American Indian High School Dropout: The Magnitude of the Problem, Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1968.

[2] "Indian Education Annual Report, 1966-1967," op. cit.

Curriculum

When discussing curriculum, it is necessary to take each school in the system separately.

North Side Elementary.--A kindergarten existed from 1960 to 1963, but has been discontinued.

There are no special student programs at North Side Elementary. The ones that exist (dyslexia, special education) are in South Side Elementary.

New Math was introduced in 1963.

Programmed instruction in basic subjects is used approximately 10 percent of the teaching time, but affects 100 percent of the students.

No specific classes exist for or about Indians.

South Side Elementary.--A kindergarten has continued in existence since 1950.

There are three special programs for students. The oldest is the dyslexia program which started in 1963. There are 150 students involved.

A special education class began in 1969. Six Indians and four white children attend currently.

New Math was introduced in 1958.

Programmed instruction is used in reading, geography and math. It was initiated in 1964. It affects 30 percent of the student population.

There are no specific classes for or about Indians.

Junior High.--There are special classes in reading (started 1960), math (started 1965) and English (started 1968) for children who have difficulty with these subjects. Approximately 25 percent of the junior high students are affected by these classes.

New Math was started in the Junior High in 1963.

Programmed instruction in math (initiated unknown date), reading (initiated in 1962) and geography (initiated in 1967) affects 100 percent of the 7th and 8th grade students, but is used for only a certain number of weeks during the school year.

There are no specific classes for or about Indians.

High School.--Special student programs already in existence at the high school include a flight training course and an automobile maintenance course.

Courses recently added are business law and second-year mechanical drawing.

A language lab was instituted in 1962 for those students taking foreign languages.

Programmed instruction is not used.

There are no courses for or about Indians.

On the whole, the curriculum of the Cut Bank, Montana schools is standard for the state. There are no special programs or courses directed either at the Indian students or toward an examination of Indian culture and history.

Parents

The Cut Bank parents were the most acculturated group in the University of Colorado's regional sample.

Sixteen Indian parents were interviewed in the fall of 1968. Although the sample is small, from the interviews several questions were extracted that reflect Indian parental attitude toward the school system:

1. Did the Indian parents like or dislike something about the system?

   Like - 12 Dislike - 4 (discrimination, prejudice)

2. Did the Indian parents think the school administration was doing a good job?

   Good - 15 Bad - 1

3. Have Indian parents ever voted in School Board elections?

   Yes - 9 No - 7

From the sample of 16 parent interviews in Cut Bank, it appears that most of the Indian parents seem satisfied, with the exception of the parents and children at one school where there was concern about teacher prejudice and discrimination against Indian students.

There is no PTA in Cut Bank, although one did exist about ten years ago. Parental involvement, beyond participation in school board elections, now is restricted to parent-teacher conferences several times a year.

Innovation

Innovation in Cut Bank revolves around programs or concepts that cost the school system little or no money. A dyslexia program was set up about three years ago with federal money and is now run inexpensively by the local system.

Over ten years ago, through the interest of a local ex-Air Force teacher, a LINK trainer (aircraft trainer) was purchased inexpensively from a surplus outlet. With this training device a flight training program was established.

A new curriculum innovation committee, made up of a panel of local citizens, was organized by the school board to promote the local acceptance of any change in the operation of the school. Currently the committee is considering the adoption of sex education.

Cut Bank, although conservative, does innovate. But the system does so slowly, deliberately, and with careful attention to the cost factor.

Trends

Cut Bank's school system is basically conservative. From the history of the system it can be seen that any large financial expenditure has been resisted. From the early decisions made by the railroad that critically affected the town, through the past decade of fear that the oil industry will leave, a world view of uncertainty has been produced.

Currently overcrowding in the Junior and High Schools is a problem. A building program for either a middle school or a high school has been proposed. The current school board, however, has not to this date made a decision.

This conservative trend is being challenged as a more progressive college-educated group seeks to gain representation on the school board. As yet, they have not been successful. There is little political pressure from Indian residents for school board positions or special programs.

It is possible that growing political consciousness on the part of the Blackfeet Tribal Government in Browning will spill over into Cut Bank, encouraging Indian residents to run for school board seats or to give active support to particular white candidates.

A recent event may have an effect on the school system. Through a Federal grant, Cut Bank has engaged an outside agency to do an economic development study. The final report should be completed by January 1970. One of the tentative findings of the study is that industrial development would not be as advantageous to Cut Bank as would an institution of higher education--for example, a junior college.

References

Harstad and Associates, "Housing in Cut Bank, Montana: Relative Condition of Structure," Seattle, Washington, 1969. (to be published)

Huffman, Howard, "Community Inventory and Analyses for the Chamber of Commerce of Cut Bank, Montana. A Report prepared for the Industrial Development Committee, Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce," Bozeman, Montana.

Indian Education Annual Report, Helena, Montana: Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1967 and 1968.

State of Montana, "Montana's Public Welfare Program," Helena, Montana: Department of Public Welfare, 1968.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indians: The Blackfeet," mimeographed, 1966.

"Profile: Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation, Montana, 28 August, 1968, Claims Legislation Report," Bureau of Indian Affairs: Browning, Montana, mimeographed, 1968.